

Survival Arts Media
Pamela Susan Hawkins

Founder, Howie Gutstadt, formerly member of Commediation and People's Video Theater, with interests in video as a tool for social change. Survival Arts Media was listed in Radical Software, V. 2 N 1 1972 as a new listing. Formerly listed as People' Video Theater, Manhattan.

Survival Arts Media was formed in 1972. Members: Gail Edwards, Howard Gutstadt, Molly Hughes, Ben Levine, Danny Luciano, Richard Malone. Functioned as a collective with interests in community education and health programs, multi-media shows and events. Produced programming about the regional community. Located in Jamestown, NY.

Public Access Celebration: Report on Public Access in New York, January 1973.
Excerpts from *Growth of a Media Center in Jamestown, NY* by Howard Gutstadt 1977
The Artists and Craftsmen Anthology, distributed by Survival Arts Media and Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System, 1977.

Public Access Celebration: Report on Public Access in New York

Public Access Celebration occurred in New York City, July 6-8, 1972. Public Access Celebration marked the first anniversary of Public Channel programming on cable television in Manhattan. Individuals, video groups, City agencies and the New York State Council on the Arts, Sterling Manhattan Cable and Teleprompter Corporation cooperated to produce an informational event about public access for the general public. Survival Arts Media participated and helped produce a report, published in January 1973.

Design/Intention of the Public Access Celebration: A Focus for the Design of a Responsive Media System

- From Public Access Celebration: Report on Public Access in New York, January 1973.

Howard Gutstadt
Survival Arts Media

A Personal overview

The Celebration was envisioned as a three day information generating process which would link the activities occurring in a network of viewing/access centers throughout Manhattan, creating a multi-media two-way public information system.

The design of the overall structure originated in cooperative planning sessions, generated by the interaction of many individuals, independent media resources; representatives of two cable systems, cultural, educational, and service institutions, and members of specific communities. These planning sessions enabled us to continually redefine the design of the celebration by

utilizing the constantly mushrooming resources of life energies and technological hardware.

A Survey of Public Access Celebration Media Components and Systems

1. Print Media: Specific promotional messages in city-wide and local newspapers. Invitational messages distributed through flyers for local viewing centers. Posters to inform the general public.
2. Radio: Public service announcements. Discussions and interviews on various radio programs. WRVR radio cable simulcast of live programs.
3. Portable 1/2 inch video systems, a vehicle for training and programming by the public participating in access center activities.
4. Large-scale closed circuit television systems interfaced with public access channels (Bellevue Hospital).
5. Two cable systems interconnected for simultaneous cablecasting on the public access channels C and D. Channel C was used to program the first year's retrospective of videotapes and films. Channel D was used for live programming and slide shows as well as tapes produced during the three days at public access viewing centers. Sterling-Manhattan Cable Company's commercial Channel 10 was used for in-studio, live programming. Live programming via microwave link from Central Park (utilizing mobile unit for origination) was cablecast on Teleprompter's commercial Channel 10.
6. Telephones were utilized for live, over-the-air viewer responses on Channel D and Channel 10 to disseminate information about Public Access to viewers on both systems and to create a point to point net between viewing centers, company studios and cable subscriber audience.

The overall aims of the Public Access Celebration were the following:

1. To promote public awareness and participation in programming the public access channels.
2. To facilitate interaction between independent media resources programming the public access channels.
3. To foster awareness in cultural, educational, and service institutions of the potentials of communicating with their communities via closed-circuit video systems and/or the public access channels.
4. To help emerging communities define their information needs by participating in the public access experiment and to facilitate the participation of communities newly defined by information needs.

5. To create models for viewing/access centers.
6. To explore possibilities of directly involving cable subscribers and viewers in interactive television formats.
7. To explore possibilities of integrating various media into communications nets to create a flexible broadbased public access information system.

Excerpts from Growth of a Media Center in Jamestown, NY by Howard Gutstadt 1977

During the last year, Survival Arts Media has been active in the Jamestown area, which is located at the foot of Chautauqua Lake in the Southwestern corner of New York State. Most of our activity has been focused on the development of a modest media facility whose programs will benefit the residents of Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties. These programs fall broadly into two areas: the first is the development of a studio which is equipped with video and related media systems; the second is the design and origination of cooperative programs with regional arts-service and educational facilities.

The studio is staffed by Mollie Hughes and myself on a fulltime basis, and on a parttime basis by local individuals who are utilizing it to produce and learn with media. Our personal work in multimedia and exposure to media programs in facilities throughout the State have encouraged us to equip this studio to enable individuals to explore media in diverse ways. In order to support this exploration, the Survival Arts Media staff teaches a variety of production skills to any individual who has sufficient interest and time to work on ongoing projects.

The first set of skills involves multi-location portapak and Super 8 production. Work with these systems usually involves documentary and improvisational themes for which preproduction planning, scripting, and camera and associated sound-production techniques are taught. Portapak production is done with Sony 8400 ensembles, and Super 8 production with both silent and single-sound systems. Once videotapes and films have been recorded, we move on to post-production techniques, which include a variety of editing structures, sound mixes, graphics, and video special effects. Most editing is accomplished with a system comprised of two 8650's, audio deck, graphic equalizer, sound mixer and waveform monitor. In addition, there is a color Panasonic system available for backup and A and B rolls. Super 8 to video transfers are done on a Kodak VPX system, which we access from the television studio in the local junior college.

Another area of work emphasizes electronic image generation and involves the manipulation of images on the television display by controlled processing of the video signal. The heart of the studio's processing system is the Electronic Associates of Berkeley's Videolab. The EAB lab is presently two modules comprised of a number of submodules. The system processes video from six external video sources and is capable of genlocking a signal from a pre-recorded color tape with five on-line cameras. These input sources are accessed on a 36 point, 6 channel switching matrix, which can also be controlled by internal control voltages and logic pulses. Video signals can be routed from the matrix through a variety of modules which include a fourchannel colorizer which organizes the video signal into four priority key-levels and allows

the user to control the chroma saturation, hue, pedestal and video detail on each channel. A discussion of the flexibility of the EAB system would require a separate article; but it would be useful to mention that the system is designed as a learning tool with external patching done either manually, from module to module, or by creating interfaces with other systems, such as audio synthesizers and computer systems.

The most complex area that people have begun to involve themselves with is intennedia. Individuals working in this area often have previously acquired skills and interests in photography, film, music and occasionally, the graphic arts. This work, being more complex, usually takes a longer time to develop, but is generally fruitful as a learning process, since it draws on the relative strengths of a number of media to communicate individual concepts.

Cooperative Programs

Since our arrival in Jamestown, we have also been promoting cooperative programs with facilities involved with media services in the region. The Chautauqua- Cattaraugus Library System has been helpful in encouraging this process. Working with Jean Haynes, Director of the library's film program, we have evolved several ongoing video programs. The first was the genesis of an Artists and Craftsmen Anthology-a library of videotapes produced in collaboration with area artists and craftsmen. The videotapes vary in program style or format, ranging from documentary, how- to-do-it tapes, and portraits of individual artists to collaborative programs involving script writing, use of various media systems, including video, film, animation, photography and music. These programs explore the historical, cultural and sociological climate of the arts and crafts of the region.

The anthology of videotapes will be distributed through a variety of regional facilities. The Chatauqua-Cattaraugus Library System will make the tapes available on a random access basis - individuals or groups may request playback on the library's video system.

The local cable system, which has a density of over 90 percent in the immediate Jamestown area (which has a population of approximately 40,000), has a number of headends (or programming points) one of which is located in the Jamestown Community College TV studio. SAM has been working closely with Ed Tomassini, the director of the studio, to encourage local programming, and to make available the anthology of videotapes. Regional distribution will be possible through a cooperative effort with the Board of Cooperative Education Services. The BOCES organizations in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties have installed transmitting systems and a series of towers throughout the counties for the purpose of translating regional educational TV program signals to homes that would ordinarily be deprived of these signals because of regional topology. Along with their licenses to relay, the BOCES also have an option to provide a number of hours of local programming this fall, part of which will be the Artists and Craftsmen Anthology. We anticipate continuing to produce tapes for this anthology during the following year and to seek tape exchanges with other regional centers.

The second cooperative program initiated during the last year was entitled Spring Video. This program was a visiting artist presentation and workshop series done in collaboration with the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System and supported by technical assistance funds from the New York State Council on the Arts. We invited a number of artists working in video and related media to present their work in the SAM studio and the Prendergast Library Gallery in Jamestown. These artists were invited because their work represented the level of artistic achievement and diversity that we wish to encourage in this region.

To initiate the series, Mollie Hughes and I gave a retrospective of videotapes produced

during the last five years. They included programs dealing with documentary themes, community feedback structures and multimedia structures. The first visiting artists were Nancy Cain and Bart Friedman from Lanesville TV or Media Bus. They conducted a workshop on local documentary video and local TV programming. This was followed by Bill Jungles from Buffalo, who works simultaneously with video, film and photo/video graphics. Next, Jane Aaron, also from Media Bus, gave a workshop on film animation; followed by me and Ralph Jones of Buffalo in a collaborative workshop in sound synthesis and video synthesis. Ernie Gusella from New York City presented tapes which emphasize the individual artist as performer. Walter Wright from Binghamton, NY, gave a workshop on video synthesis and some of the implications for video and computer systems. To conclude the series, Carl Geiger, from Synapse Studio in Syracuse, brought a minicomputer system which interfaced with our EAB videolab. He discussed the fundamentals of computer control of video display systems.

In the coming year, we anticipate expanding the program by inviting approximately 12 visiting artists to Jamestown. By arranging for showings of visiting artists' work along with explanatory interviews on the BOCES UHF channels and local cable systems, we will be able to reach the majority of the residents of Chautauqua and Cattaraugus Counties with the benefits of the visiting artists series.

THE ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMEN ANTHOLOGY

Survival Arts Media, Inc., in cooperation with the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System, are releasing for distribution a series of videotapes produced with artists and craftsmen who work in the Chautauqua-Cattaraugus region.

These videotapes are available as single programs or as sets of three programs dubbed to ½ inch or ¾ inch cassettes formats.

The Artists and Craftsmen Anthology is funded in part by the New York State Council on the Arts.

Dennis Dorogi: Craftsman This tape was made with Dennis Dorogi, a fine wood craftsman and sculptor from Brocton, New York. He illustrates the construction of the mountain dulcimer and discusses the origins of the instrument and traditional dulcimer music. 16 minutes.

The Van Arsdale Family. This tape was produced during their 49th annual family reunion in Frewsburg, New York. Each year, members of the family come from various parts of the country to carry on the family tradition of hammered dulcimer music, originated in the 19th century by their grandfather, Jesse R. Martin. 17 minutes 54 seconds.

Mike Flaxman: Toymaker Several years ago Mike Flaxman, a community-minded craftsman, moved with his family from Buffalo to settle near Clymer, New York. In Mike Flaxman: Toymaker we see how Mike and his wife Rosie developed a right livelihood through making wooden toys and adapted to country living through mutual support within their new community. 21 minutes 20 seconds

Mike Finn: Songs, Poems and Stories. Somewhat different, in style, this program was made in collaboration with Mike Finn, a poet and illustrator residing in Cattaraugus County. Mike has a

strong commitment to the ecology of the region and has recently published a book of poems entitled Listen Friend. 22 minutes.

Frank Barney and Brushwood. This program depicts the struggles of a graphic artist to survive and develop a teaching and working facility for use by a community of local artists in Thermal, New York. 17 minutes 18 seconds.

Music at the Mill with Ted Trainer. This tape was made with a local musician in a deserted section of Broadhead Mills, one of the oldest factory buildings in Jamestown. An interesting juxtaposition is created between the music and stark factory environment. 14 minutes 45 seconds.

-From information distributed by Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System, 1977.